*That they may have life*by Bishop Chad W. Zielinski

*National Eucharistic Revival: Year of the Parish*

One of the most painful things I have done as a bishop was to temporarily suspend the public celebration of Mass due to COVID-19 concerns. I heard and saw the frustration and concern of the good people of God as they thirsted for the Eucharist in their lives. Many of my brother bishops shared the same sentiments.

In November 2020, with COVID cautionary procedures in place nationwide, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) held its annual Plenary Assembly via Zoom. Over 300 U.S. bishops shared their experiences and concerns about the pandemic.

Once COVID restrictions started to lift, parishes slowly returned to the public celebration of Mass. However, a growing number of Catholics were becoming accustomed to the “online Mass” option, and parishes were finding that some of their members were not returning to in-person Mass.

The ongoing dialogue between the bishops developed into a much more extensive discussion of the Eucharist, which led to a further discussion concerning surveys/polls about Catholics’ belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. It was then that the bishops’ conference realized that there was an apparent great need for a renewed catechesis on the Eucharist. The USCCB Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis took the reins for further discussion.

The following year, at the bishops’ 2021 June Plenary Assembly, the Evangelization and Catechesis Committee advised that the bishops launch a Eucharistic Revival process. At the Fall Plenary Assembly that same year, the bishops approved to move forward with a National Eucharistic Revival. It was to be launched on Corpus Christi Sunday of 2022. This entire process, I truly believe, has been guided by the Holy Spirit.

**Year of the Diocese (2022-2023)**

The first year of the Eucharistic Revival process was dedicated to the diocese, which was meant to gain general and popular interest among Catholics. At my installation as the new shepherd of the Diocese of New Ulm in September 2022, I proposed a passionate engagement with the Eucharistic Revival process with three simple points: Hear God, Hand Him Your Heart, and Have Hope.

With this vision and movement, a Diocese of New Ulm Eucharistic Revival Committee was established consisting of diocesan staff, clergy, and lay people. I am honored to serve on this committee with so many talented and faith-filled people who earnestly desire to be fearless witnesses of the Good News of the greatest gift the Church has in the Holy Eucharist – Christ Himself!

**Year of the Parish (2023-2024)**

As we now move into the Year of the Parish Revival, which began on June 11, Feast of Corpus Christi, the National Eucharistic Revival Committee has developed a Leader’s Playbook: Year of Parish Revival as a guide for each diocese. “The purpose of the Year of the Parish Revival is to discern how we might heal, form, convert, unify, and send our parishioners through a rekindled relationship with Jesus in the Eucharist” (Leader’s Playbook, page 6). The Leader’s Playbook has proposed four invitations for our spiritual focus: Reinvigorate Worship, Personal Encounter, Robust Formation, and Send as Missionaries. After entering into dialogue with several bishop groups at our USCCB and regional meetings, I am convinced that this first section is of “paramount importance.”

The first section, “Reinvigorating Worship,” with an emphasis on “*ars celebrandi*” (the art of worship), has many references to Pope Francis’ document *Desiderio Desiveravi* (I Earnestly Desire) from June 29, 2022. He has an entire section on the “*ars celebrandi*.” I encourage you to read this document as I truly believe it is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

The Year of the Parish Revival will focus on celebrating the Mass: encountering Christ in the Liturgy of the Word, in the gathered community, in the person of the preist, and above all else, in the Holy Eucharist. You will find this substantially documented in Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1374; see also Pope Paul VI’s *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no.7 and *Mysterium Fidei,* no. 39.

As the Diocese of New Ulm Eucharistic Revival Committee solicits help to fan the flame of faith alive in parishes in our diocese, I ask for your involvement and especially prayer that a mighty thirst for Our Lord in the Holy Eucharistic increase with great fervor, drawing people in greater numbers to the altar of worship.

I want to close my words by drawing your attention to a part of the closing prayer that Pope Francis used in his document on the Mass, “I Earnestly Desire.” It is a prayer taken from a letter St. Francis wrote to his brothers. This part of the prayer is being used on the Diocese of New Ulm’s Year of the Parish prayer card, available online on the diocesan website, www.dnu.org, and in parishes.

*“Let everyone be struck with fear, let the whole world tremble, and let the heavens exult when Christ, the Son of the living God, is present on the altar in the hands of a priest!”*

– Saint Francis of Assisi

A Letter to the Entire Order II